THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b): For the 8th Five Year Plan period 1992-93 to 1996-97 108 new coal mining projects including a few Ninth Plan starts have been identified for development. Working Group on coal and lignite has projected an outlay of 5998.28 crores for new projects of 8th Five Year Plan and 9th Plan new starts. Allocation made for these projects for 8th Plan period is Rs. 1946 crores (at 1991-92 prices). Fund constraints are being experienced in taking up new projects which have been formulated and are waiting for Govt. approval. Many of the projects are yet to be scrutinised from techno-economic angle.

(c) and (d) With a view to improving efficiency and financial viability and for achieving self-reliance, Coal India Ltd. (CIL) have a plan of action. For implementation of various measures identified in action Plan, CIL have submitted a proposal seeking the World Bank assistance of US $ 500 million (Rs. 1500 crores approx.). On availability of the credit, CIL intends to utilise this for implementing schemes to meet the overall corporate objective of financial viability. Proposal has been submitted to the World Bank.

Open coal fields working in the country

3549. SHRI RAM RATAN RAM: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) how many open coalfields are working in the country;

(b) how many of them are runing on profit;

(c) whether production in such coalfields is costlier than that of deep mines; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) The number of open cast coal mines in Coal India Limited (CIL) is 118. In adition there are 66 mines having both Underground|Opencast units. The nuber of opencat coal mines working in Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) are 8..

(b) There were 164 cost centres in OC mines in CIL, of which 113 were running on profit (provisional) during 1992-93. Out of 8 opencast mines, 5 were running in profit in SCCL.

(c) and (d) Generally cost of opencast mining in less than the cost of underground mining (deep mining).

Stagnant production of Coal

3550. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that coal production in the country has remained stagnant;

(b) what was the rate of increase or decrease of coal production in 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93;

(c) what were the respective target for above years;

(d) what steps are proposed to modernise coal-mining operations keeping in view the health and safety of miners; and

(e) whether it is fact that managements of coal mines are paying very little attention to the working conditions in coal mines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) No, Sir,